

Implementing Mission Barbados

A roadmap for state transformation

Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley and
Professor Mariana Mazzucato

Policy Report – December 2025



Institute for Innovation
and Public Purpose

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Written by

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Preface by Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley and Professor Mariana Mazzucato

At COP27, we asked a simple question: “When will leaders lead?” In Barbados, that call is being answered. From the highest levels of government providing political will to civil servants working diligently on the ground – and with our Social Partners and citizens rallying behind a shared purpose – Barbados is mobilising a whole-of-nation effort to transform our country. This courage to break old moulds and govern with vision is not easy, but it is necessary. We believe it will provide valuable lessons to other countries on how to tackle global challenges through strategic, outcomes-oriented policies.

Such a mission-oriented approach, by its very nature, challenges business-as-usual and demands new ways of working. It means focusing on long-term outcomes rather than short-term outputs. It requires cross-ministerial collaboration – recognizing, for example, that climate resilience is not only the remit of an environment ministry but of health, agriculture, and a host of other sectors. It also calls for innovative public-private relationships that share the burden and the bounty in pursuit of the common good. Barbados has embraced this challenge, understanding that achieving truly inclusive and sustainable growth requires tackling problems at their root. In doing so, Barbados stands out for its ambition and commitment to deep transformation.

In early 2023, Barbados set out on this journey of transformation. A key milestone came in May 2023, when the Government, together with its Social Partnership of labor and business leaders, signed the Declaration of Mission Barbados – a pledge to pursue six national missions to fundamentally transform the country by 2030. These missions target Barbados’s greatest challenges and opportunities – from achieving food and water security to improving public health and safety – under a unifying vision for inclusive and sustainable development. The level of collective commitment and cooperation since has been truly inspiring, setting the stage for the hard work of implementation that followed.

Delivering on Mission Barbados has required reimagining how government and society work together. We have established new institutional mechanisms to ensure close collaboration and continuous coordination across ministries. For example, a Mission Barbados Control Centre and six Mission Boards have been established under the joint leadership of the Prime Minister’s Office and the Office of the Head of the Public Service, embedding mission coordination at the heart of public administration.



By housing these critical units at the center of government and linking them with permanent secretaries across all ministries, we ensure that capacity building and mission implementation remain interconnected and mutually reinforcing. In short, the machinery of government is being re-tooled to break down silos and drive our missions forward. Equally important has been investing in Barbados’ civil servants. A notable effort was the Applied Learning programme co-designed with the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, which ran from June to November 2024. Through this programme, Barbadian public officers worked side by side with IIPP experts to co-create practical solutions – developing new approaches to public procurement, building digital public services, and honing other critical implementation skills. This experience not only equipped the civil service with new tools and capabilities but also ignited a sense of risk-taking and innovation. Their energy and creativity provide optimism that the future of our public service is in capable hands. Moreover, the knowledge gained through this collaboration has already informed tangible initiatives such as the establishment of GovTech Barbados (a new public innovation agency) and the rollout of a national digital ID system – early evidence that we are building capacity to sustain mission-oriented work.

This report is the culmination of our joint efforts over the past several years and offers a roadmap for the way ahead. It builds on the initial November 2023 report, A Mission-Oriented Strategy for Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth in Barbados, which set out the six missions, and now focuses on how to transform the state to deliver them.

The pages that follow present detailed recommendations in five key areas:

1. designing policies around transformative outcomes;
2. instituting mission-driven governance, partnerships and public participation;
3. leveraging innovative financial tools aligned with mission goals;
4. investing in public sector capabilities (including digital transformation and improved coordination); and
5. establishing robust systems for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

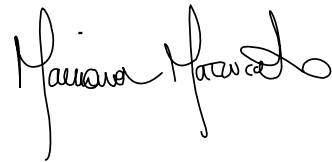
Together, these five pillars form an integrated plan to modernize Barbados's institutions so that they can effectively achieve the 2030 targets. By adopting this transformative agenda, Barbados is showing the world that ambition, not caution, is the surest path through uncertain times.

This report would not have been possible without Luca Kuehn von Burgsdorff, Senior Policy Advisor at UCL IIPP. Based in Barbados six months from March to August 2025, he worked with the Prime Minister's Office and the Office of the Head of the Public Service to establish the Mission Barbados Control Centre and the six Mission Boards, which are steering the work.

It has been our privilege to both witness and participate in this ambitious undertaking. It is with gratitude and pride that we present this report, confident in the enduring commitment of our Social Partners and the Government and inspired by the collective spirit of Barbadians driving change. We remain committed to supporting Barbados throughout this mission to 2030 and beyond, as the country's bold new development pathway continues to inspire others and demonstrate how mission-driven approaches can lead to real change. Together, we are not only preparing for the future – we are actively shaping it.



The Hon. Mia Amor Mottley S.C., M.P.



Professor Mariana Mazzucato

Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, University College London and Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

Foreword by Mrs Donna Cadogan

It gives me profound pleasure to introduce this timely report on state transformation in Barbados, produced in collaboration with the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP). Our friends in the Social Partnership signed the Declaration of Mission Barbados in 2023 and the level of cooperation that they have provided since has been inspiring.

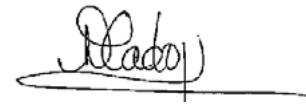
The missions approach outlined in this report has been embraced across the public service, notably by our younger officers. Their enthusiasm for collaboration, ideation, and co-creation provides a sense of encouragement and optimism for me, having dedicated nearly four decades of service to Barbados. Observing this new generation of public officers taking initiative and eagerly participating in shaping our nation's future assures me that the future of our public service, and indeed our country, is in capable hands.

The successful implementation of Mission Barbados depends fundamentally on close collaboration and continuous coordination between government ministries and departments. The placement of both the Mission Barbados Control Centre and the Public Sector Transformation Unit within the Office of the Head of the Public Service underscores this requirement. By housing these critical units at the heart of public administration, directly interfacing with permanent secretaries across all ministries, we ensure that capacity building and mission implementation are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

The partnership with IIPP, particularly through the applied learning programme delivered between June and November 2024, has been invaluable in equipping our public servants with new tools and capabilities. This programme demonstrated the value of co-creation, where civil servants and colleagues from IIPP jointly developed the practical skills to implement the missions – from new approaches to public procurement to digital public capabilities.

I am deeply honoured to collaborate with such a dedicated team, committed to advancing Mission Barbados as a guiding framework for future governance. This initiative marks a critical step towards

a resilient and adaptive public service, responsive to the evolving demands of Barbadian society. It is with gratitude and pride that I endorse this report, confident in the demonstrated commitment of our Social Partnership and inspired by the youthful energy and collective spirit of our public officers. Together, we are not only preparing for the future but actively shaping it.



Mrs Donna Cadogan



1. INTRODUCTION

Barbados, like all countries, is facing a complex set of challenges. The area of climate resilience provides just one example. In 2024 alone, Hurricane Beryl caused damage equivalent to approximately 1.4 per cent of Barbados's GDP. Meanwhile, the country remains heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels, spending BBD\$1.122 billion annually, undermining economic stability and environmental resilience (Bradshaw, 2023; Cumberbatch, 2024; Gill, 2024). The task of the government is to transform these challenges – and many others, ranging from public health and citizen safety to food and water security – into opportunities for investment, innovation, and collaboration.

Mission-oriented policies can help do this by aligning investment and economic opportunities with social and environmental priorities. For example, a mission to decarbonize Barbados' economy can do two things simultaneously: it can decrease the country's dependence on imported fossil fuels and vulnerability to climate shocks, while also creating concrete market opportunities related to areas such as clean energy, climate-resilient tourism, and new decarbonized mobility systems. In other words, the focus is not just on growth for the sake of growth but on directed, green growth. This alignment of economic with social and environmental objectives is nothing short of a new approach to development.

In 2023, Barbados adopted six missions through its Mission Barbados programme (Government of Barbados, 2023a; Mazzucato, 2023a). Each mission seeks to tackle a major challenge facing the country, with concrete targets set for 2030 (see Figure 1). Rather than tackling issues in isolation or with short-term fixes, Barbados is trying to adopt an integrated response that aligns public investments, policies, and partnerships toward common outcomes. Each mission comes with sub-targets and dedicated programmes, all of which are intended to convert the country's most urgent problems into opportunities for growth (Mazzucato, Doyle, et al., 2024).

Mission Barbados demands a new approach to government – a transformation of the state's institutions, processes, and capabilities. Prime Minister Mottley has called this a process of deconstruction and reconstruction: deconstructing the institutions, frameworks, and mindsets

the country inherited from years of colonization and reconstructing them into systems that work for Barbadians and help tackle the biggest challenges facing the country.

The report is structured into five sections, each representing an important pillar of this state transformation: designing policy guided by long-term outcomes versus delivering short-term outputs; establishing a whole-of-country and whole-of-government governance approach to strengthen partnerships and break down silos; using financial tools to direct investment in line with national priorities; building public sector capabilities to strengthen in-house implementation; and embedding a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework to measure progress and adapt accordingly. By adopting a transformative agenda, Barbados is showing the world that ambition, not caution, is the surest path through uncertain times.

Figure 1. Mission Barbados transforms national challenges into six missions to achieve by 2030 (Government of Barbados, 2023a)

Challenges	Missions
<p>Challenge 1 – An unhealthy planet in crisis: Barbados faces significant climate-related risks, like droughts, coral reef depletion and coastal erosion compounded by Sargassum seaweed. The island is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ecosystem changes that threaten key sectors like tourism and agriculture. In 2022 alone, the country spent BBD\$1.122 billion on imported fossil fuels, a heavy energy reliance that undermines economic resilience.</p>	<p>Mission 1 – Sustainable development: By 2030, become a clean and beautiful large-ocean state, championing sustainable development locally and globally – with the goal of all domestic activities becoming 100 per cent sustainable by 2035.</p>
<p>Challenge 2 – Constantly changing value system, which threatens social cohesion: A shift towards individualism, declining civic participation, and low productivity levels highlight a weakening sense of community in Barbados. Low self-esteem, especially among young people, risks undermining Barbadian identity, posing an obstacle to community engagement.</p>	<p>Mission 2 – Citizen empowerment: By 2030, transform Barbados into a country of active, involved citizens. All Barbadians will feel empowered and engaged in the social, economic, and cultural development of the country as confident, creative, compassionate and entrepreneurial citizens.</p>
<p>Challenge 3 – Food and water insecurity: Barbados relies heavily on food imports – over BBD\$600 million annually – which makes it vulnerable to global price shocks and supply chain disruptions. Climate-induced droughts, aging infrastructure, and declining local food production have led to frequent disruptions in water supplies and exacerbated food insecurity, especially among vulnerable groups. Barbados experiences significant water losses, losing approximately 40 per cent of its water due to non-revenue water issues.</p>	<p>Mission 3 – Food and water security: By 2030, ensure that every Barbadian has equitable and reliable access to clean water and affordable nutritious food.</p>
<p>Challenge 4 – Deteriorating physical and mental health and pockets of social instability: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent around 80 per cent of deaths in Barbados, partly driven by sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy diets. The economic costs of poor health are extensive, causing lower productivity, increased absenteeism, and pressure on social and healthcare services. What is more, the world's vulnerability to public health epidemics is likely to increase in the coming years. The number of recorded murders in Barbados decreased by 51 per cent from 43 in 2022 to 21 in 2023, before jumping to 49 cases in 2024.</p>	<p>Mission 4 – Public health and safety: By 2030, create a society that prioritizes wellness and happiness. Improve public health and safety, leading to a 50 per cent reduction in new cases of non-communicable diseases and a 50 per cent reduction in crime.</p>
<p>Challenge 5 – Development deficit that has spawned financial marginalization and worker vulnerability: Financial marginalization remains pervasive among youths, persons with disabilities, and low-income workers who face barriers to financial literacy and services, reinforcing inter-generational poverty. Approximately 17.5 per cent of Barbadians lived below the poverty line as of 2016, which perpetuates wealth gaps, economic vulnerability, and reliance on social services. Furthermore, the vulnerability of workers' job security will increase with the spread of artificial intelligence (AI) and the gig economy.</p>	<p>Mission 5 – Economic empowerment: By 2030, empower and enfranchise all Barbadian workers and families by creating opportunities for ownership and wealth creation that enable Barbadians to take better care of themselves and each other and reduce the rate of poverty by 50 per cent.</p>
<p>Challenge 6 – Inequitable digital access and slow technological conversion: Despite advanced ICT infrastructure, significant segments of the population lack digital access and essential digital literacy, limiting their economic and social opportunities. Slow adoption of digital technology across public and private sectors has made doing business cumbersome, hindering productivity, innovation, and investment growth.</p>	<p>Mission 6 – Digital transformation: By 2030, transform Barbados to be a high-functioning, resilient society with seamless access to services and meaningful digital inclusion for all Barbadians.</p>

2. MISSION-ORIENTED POLICY DESIGN

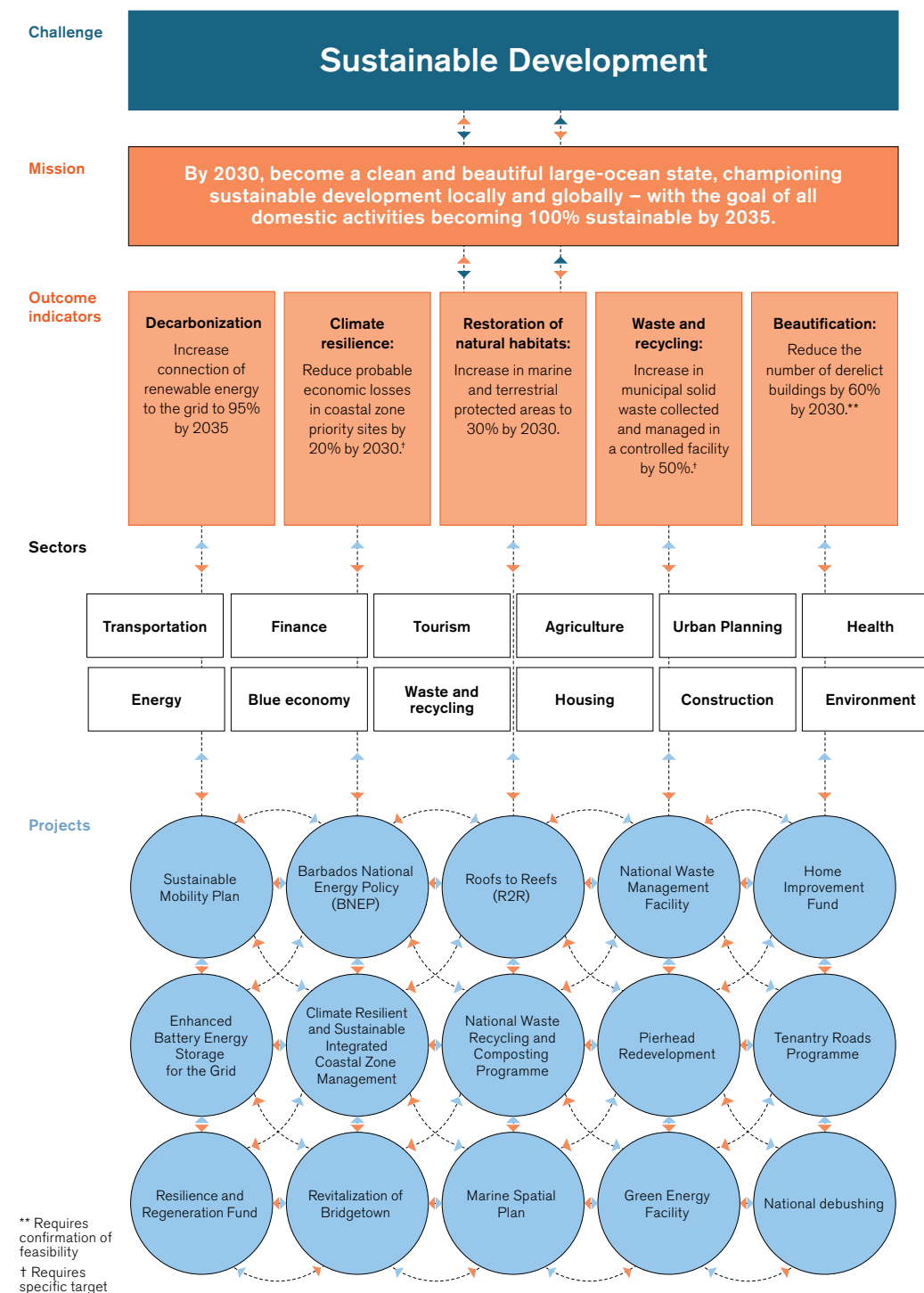
Missions are bold, clear, and ambitious societal goals that make it easier to break down difficult challenges (Mazzucato, 2018b, 2021). Figure 1 shows an overview of the six challenges identified by the government of Barbados and the Social Partners, along with the six missions. Missions should follow five criteria: (1) bold, inspirational, and resonant with all citizens; (2) clear in setting a direction with a measurable goal, such that it is evident if the mission has been achieved or not; (3) ambitious while realistic, leveraging and transforming existing capacity; (4) cross-sectoral, inter-disciplinary, and cross-ministerial, engaging a wide array of actors to contribute to solutions; and (5) conducive to driving multiple bottom-up solutions, enabling new ideas and collaborations to emerge (Mazzucato, 2021). Three characteristics of missions stand out. First, they rethink the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' elements of policy design. Second, they focus on outcomes, not outputs. Third, they rely on principles and values to help shape their implementation.

2.1. Verticals and horizontals

Mission-oriented policies represent a new approach to industrial strategy. Industrial strategy refers to a coordinated set of policy measures aimed at achieving specific objectives. They encompass both supply- and demand-side interventions: supply-side measures typically include grants, subsidies, loans, tax incentives, and regulatory adjustments intended to encourage business activities such as research and development by reducing associated costs. Demand-side interventions focus on expanding or creating new markets through tools such as public procurement, price guarantees, and local content requirements. Additionally, industrial strategy includes vertical and horizontal dimensions. Vertical policies target specific sectors or technologies, while horizontal policies, on the other hand, apply economy-wide, creating conditions conducive to overall economic success, such as a skilled workforce and robust infrastructure for innovation.

Missions become the vertical aspect of a new approach to industrial strategy, replacing the sector or technology focus of traditional industrial strategy. This does not mean that governments no longer need to pay attention to sectors. Instead, missions shift the focus to transforming sectors, enabling them to contribute to mission goals. To tackle the climate crisis, for example,

Figure 2. A mission map of Mission 1 (Sustainable development) showing the transformation of sectors required across five areas, along with a portfolio of projects*



*The outcome indicators and their targets are still being finalised by Mission Board 1.

all sectors in the economy – from agriculture and mining, to manufacturing and transportation – must decarbonize, which requires many different types of technologies and lots of projects. Consider Barbados's Mission 1 around sustainable development, which is tackling challenges as diverse as the country's vulnerability to extreme weather events, dependence on fossil fuel imports, and loss of biodiversity (see Figure 2).¹ Tackling these intertwined challenges requires transformation on multiple fronts: accelerating decarbonization, strengthening climate resilience, restoring natural habitats, improving waste management and recycling, and improving national beautification.

Consequently, the sectors that must transform to meet Mission 1 are diverse, ranging from decarbonising energy and transportation (see Box 1) to improving climate resilience in tourism and agriculture and driving innovation in the blue economy and wetland restoration. Barbados is not only a small island developing (SID) state but a large ocean state with its maritime area 437 times the size of its land. Furthermore, the government needs a portfolio of projects that all contribute directly to the overarching mission. For example, the Roofs to Reefs Programme (R2RP) is a cross-departmental national initiative that aims to build resilience across several sectors (Blunt, 2025). It includes making low- and middle-income houses more resilient, increasing freshwater storage and water use efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, decreasing pollution, implementing more sustainable land and marine space usage, and restoring coral reefs on the coast of Barbados. In other words, instead of beginning with a narrow focus on specific sectors like energy, missions broaden the focus on a set of challenges that require a range of sectors to tackle.

Meanwhile, if missions are the vertical, then areas like research and development (R&D), education, and standards are the horizontals, cutting across all missions. Horizontal policies should establish the conditions for economic success. They are important, for example, to ensure that a robust system of education and training is contributing to a talented workforce; to develop a well-connected innovation value chain that provides support for fundamental and applied research, commercialisation, adoption, and scaling; to ensure robust competition and anti-trust policies; to invest in physical and digital infrastructure; and to implement labour laws that ensure workers across the economy benefit fairly from company success.

¹ While Section 2 focuses primarily on Mission 1 (sustainable development) to illustrate key insights clearly, subsequent sections of the report will address and draw examples from the other missions. Mission maps for all six missions can be found in the Annex.

These horizontal conditions land in different countries in different ways. In Barbados, there is a strong institutional ecosystem to support the missions. The Barbados National Standards Institution (BNSI) is responsible for preparing, promoting, and implementing quality standards across sectors, enabling firms to access both domestic and international markets. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Training and Tertiary Education (MTTE) is responsible for building a future-ready workforce, notably through a number of institutions providing post-secondary and tertiary training, and more recently the National Transformation Initiative (NTI), which is experimenting with upskilling programs that span foundational digital skills, to soft skills of active citizenship and sector-specific training. Additionally, Barbados benefits from stable research and development infrastructure, including the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, which supports fundamental and applied research and innovation in areas ranging from marine science to social development. Therefore, these institutions – BNSI, MTTE, and the University of West Indies – as well as other institutions that play an important horizontal role should sit across, and help with the implementation of, all six missions.

2.2. Outcomes (and outputs)

Missions focus on outcomes, not outputs. Outputs are the immediate deliverables of policy actions, while outcomes are the longer-term societal benefits and systemic changes that result from those actions. For example, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the output was producing a specific number of vaccines, while the outcome was vaccinating all residents in a country or minimizing deaths from COVID. While a 'deliverology' approach to government prioritizes the delivery of outputs – hitting targets and completing tasks – a mission-oriented approach prioritizes outcomes. For Mission 1, this distinction is critical: success is not defined by counting green projects or delivering tasks, but by achieving transformative outcomes. Buying electric buses or installing solar panels are outputs, but the mission's aim is realized in Barbados's overall decarbonisation, a higher share of renewable energy in the grid, strengthened climate resilience in communities, and a cleaner, more beautiful environment by 2030.

Missions focus on social and environmental outcomes, not only economic outcomes. Governments may feel compelled to define missions around economic metrics like growth or productivity, but these should instead be viewed as results of investing, innovating, and collaborating to address social and environmental goals. Growth itself is not the mission, but rather an outcome

of effectively tackling these challenges through innovation and investment. Setting ambitious social and environmental targets drives the innovation and collaboration necessary to ultimately achieve sustained economic benefits.

Focusing on social and environmental outcomes yields significant benefits. First, it enables innovation across multiple sectors and disciplines, rather than confining efforts to a single technology or department. Because Mission 1's goals (decarbonisation, climate resilience, and environmental beautification on land and in the Ocean) are outcomes-oriented, they invite collaboration across energy, transport, construction, tourism, and waste management. Second, an outcomes focus allows government and stakeholders to better capture long-term transformation and dynamic effects beyond short-term delivery metrics.

Progress is measured by indicators of real impact: the increase in renewable energy's share of the national mix, measurable reductions in carbon emissions and climate-related vulnerabilities, improvements in living conditions and public spaces, and higher rates of recycling and waste being managed sustainably. This approach ensures that policy efforts are designed and assessed by the enduring improvements they create, aligning day-to-day projects with Barbados's 2030 mission objectives and enabling adaptive learning as complex changes unfold.

Box 1. Rethinking sustainable mobility in Barbados

Barbados' decarbonization agenda offers a good example of how a focus on outcomes can inform policy decisions. The country has adopted an ambitious goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2035 (Mission 1 targets are aligned with the country's nationally determined contributions (NDCs)). However, the transportation sector presents significant hurdles. It currently accounts for roughly 28 per cent of Barbados's CO₂ emissions and approximately half of the nation's final energy use, all of which is met by imported fossil fuels (Government of Barbados, 2025b). This heavy reliance on oil not only contributes to emissions but also exposes the economy to volatile import costs and currency risks.

In an effort to meet its Mission 1 targets, the government has committed to developing a Sustainable Mobility Plan. As well as electrifying vehicles, building charging stations, and upgrading grid infrastructure, the government is seeking to improve its public transportation networks, rethink its use of public lands for bicycles and walking, and shift mindsets away from personal car reliance toward shared, active, and accessible mobility options. This could mean prioritizing reliable bus and minibus services, expanding safe pedestrian and cycle paths, and nurturing a culture of shared mobility.

While this transition towards a new mobility system is expensive, it also brings huge market opportunities. The national Energy Transition and Investment Plan estimates that decarbonizing the transport sector alone will require about BBD 17.3 billion in investment between 2020 and 2040 – by far the largest share of Barbados's total net-zero transition costs (Government of Barbados, 2025b). However, transitioning to clean transport is not just an environmental necessity; it also promises substantial economic benefits. For one, it can stimulate job creation: the net-zero transition in Barbados is expected to add about 1,500 new jobs above business-as-usual by 2035 – a 55 per cent increase in direct and indirect employment – thanks largely to growth in renewable energy and EV industries (Government of Barbados, 2025b). Decarbonizing transport will also reduce fuel imports and related costs, keeping more money in the local economy. Barbados stands to save an estimated BBD 15.6 billion in cumulative fuel expenditures under the net-zero scenario, which is approximately 37 per cent less than it would spend on fuel in a business-as-usual case (Government of Barbados, 2025b). In a small open economy, the avoidance of expenditure in foreign exchange will significantly strengthen the country's balance of payments.

2.3. Values, principles, and beacons

Cross-cutting principles can be identified for consideration in the design of all missions, in how each sector and actor is engaged, and in how each project is developed. The principles affect every component of the mission. Principles that have emerged in consultations among Government, Labour, and Business and cut across Barbados' missions include protecting the planet; safeguarding and promoting Barbados' culture and identity; enfranchising and empowering workers and reducing poverty; encouraging innovation and digitalization; protecting the health, safety, and food security of the people of Barbados; leveraging Barbados' geographical location as a logistics hub; fostering citizen participation and cocreation; and designing symbiotic partnerships that share the burden and the bounty between the public and private sectors and labour.

Beyond these principles, the government has also developed a set of values that are meant to apply to all citizens and communities and to encourage daily habits that reflect these Beacons. The “Beacons of Renewal” are designed to guide the nation's mindset during this transformation (Budgetary Proposals and Financial Statement, 2025).

- 1. Accountability:** All Barbadians – ministers, civil servants, Social Partners, and citizens – are encouraged to speak up and take responsibility when something is wrong, rejecting any “culture of silence” in the face of wrongdoing.
- 2. Cleanliness:** Embracing cleanliness and care for the environment as reflections of national pride. Barbadians are called upon to keep communities and public spaces clean and beautiful, recognizing that a clean Barbados is a resilient and prosperous Barbados.
- 3. Respect and Empathy:** Committing to treat others with dignity, resolve conflicts with understanding, and unite as one community.
- 4. Solution-Oriented Mindset:** Focusing on problem-solving and action rather than complaints. Barbadians are urged to be proactive in creating solutions, cultivating a spirit of innovation and resilience in the face of challenges.
- 5. Global Citizenship with Bajan Roots:** Encouraging Barbadians to engage confidently with the wider world while staying grounded in Bajan identity. This beacon reminds citizens that Barbados' small size is not a limitation.

By cutting across all missions, the principles and Beacons ensure that the country's transformation is underpinned by a new mindset rooted in collective responsibility and a new approach rooted in partnership.

Recommendations for Section 2:

- 1. Prioritise outcomes over outputs across all missions:** Clearly define success in terms of long-term societal impacts rather than short-term deliverables. This includes adding a set of outcomes-oriented indicators—such as increased renewable energy adoption, measurable reductions in climate vulnerability, and improved public well-being—below each of the six missions.
- 2. Ensure key horizontal institutions support all missions:** Establish formal protocols requiring cross-mission engagement of horizontal institutions, notably (but not exclusively) the Barbados National Standards Institution (BNSI), Ministry of Training and Tertiary Education (MTTE), and the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. These institutions should systematically align their standards-setting, workforce training programmes (e.g., National Transformation Initiative), and research activities (respectively) with the needs of all six missions.
- 3. Commit to implementing a comprehensive Sustainable Mobility Plan:** Accelerate the development and formal adoption of the Sustainable Mobility Plan, explicitly aligning it with Mission 1's decarbonisation goals. Prioritise integrated measures—such as vehicle electrification, expansion of reliable public transport, safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and a cultural shift towards shared mobility—to significantly reduce transport emissions and fossil fuel dependence.

3. GOVERNANCE, PARTNERSHIP, AND PARTICIPATION

In May 2023, Prime Minister Mottley launched Mission Barbados as a long-term national transformation strategy, calling it “a national exercise involving every man, woman, and child who wants to step up to the plate” (Budgetary Proposals and Financial Statement, 2023). It has never been framed as a Government programme alone, but instead as a whole-of-country effort requiring broad buy-in. This has implications for the governance structure of Mission Barbados: partnership and participation must be prioritized at all levels of design and implementation.

3.1. The Social Partnership

The Social Partnership is the main institution that anchors Mission Barbados as a whole-of-country effort and is crucial to ensuring that partnerships are fit for purpose. It was established in 1993 as a collaborative framework involving Government, Trade Unions, and Employers (Fashoyin, 2001; Minto-Coy, 2011). Off the back of an economic crisis and a resulting IMF-backed adjustment proposal that prompted nationwide strikes, the three groups formed a voluntary, consensus-based forum. They signed the initial Prices-and-Incomes Protocol in August 1993, creating a model for setting wages and prices through negotiation and agreement rather than strikes and disputes. Since then, additional protocols have regularly updated the Partnership’s objectives.

Recent experiences show how the Social Partnership has played an important role in shaping the Barbadian economy. In 2018, when the country had less than four weeks’ reserves, the Social Partnership was critical in the settlement, management, and monitoring of the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan. The plan was central for the country’s economic stabilization. In 2022, amid global inflation and surging import prices, the Partnership signed a six-month Social Compact on Prices. Under the compact, the Government temporarily waived roughly BBD 17.5 million in VAT and import duties on essential goods, while major supermarkets and distributors agreed to cap their mark-ups on 47 staple items (Madden, 2022b). As a result, through voluntary cooperation rather than coercive controls, prices were kept down for consumers during the worst of the cost-of-living crisis. The initial compact (July 2022 to January 2023) was followed by a second extension into 2023 as high

inflation persisted. The Social Partnership also played an important role during the COVID-19 Pandemic, supporting pandemic management and limiting deaths to very low levels in the first six months (Deane & Ramel, 2022).

The Social Partnership has since evolved into a more ambitious strategic framework with Mission Barbados. While designing the missions in 2023, the tripartite body developed a set of principles that cut across the country’s eight missions: protecting the planet; safeguarding and promoting Barbados’ culture and identity; enfranchising and empowering workers and reducing poverty; encouraging innovation and digitalization; protecting the health, safety, and food security of the people of Barbados; leveraging Barbados’ geographical location as a logistics hub; fostering citizen participation and co-creation; and designing symbiotic partnerships that share the burden and the bounty between the public and private sectors and labour (Mazzucato, 2023a).

This means that all decisions made by the Mission Boards must take these principles into account, moving beyond price-related protocols to other areas of the economy and other types of economic decisions. The Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation (BEST) programme is an example of how these principles can play out in practice. In an effort to upgrade the tourism sector off the back of COVID, the government offered to make up to US\$200 million in funding available with a set of conditionalities attached: hotels were required to employ workers at a minimum of 80 per cent of their pay and offer training to upgrade employee skills, as well as submit plans to improve climate resilience and digitize services (Government of Barbados, 2023b; Mazzucato, 2023a). Ultimately, the performance of BEST was less than expected due to a lack of comprehensive enforcement. However, it is these types of policies, with a commitment to sharing the burden and the bounty embedded at the heart of the partnership, that can become more common and successful going forward.

3.2. Participation and co-creation

As well as redesigning partnerships, effective mission-oriented governance depends on striking a careful balance between strong central coordination and meaningful bottom-up participation. While top-level leadership can initially provide necessary direction and accountability, a transition towards broader ownership across government, institutions, communities, and social partners is crucial for mission sustainability. This shift encourages collective commitment, embedding mission-oriented approaches deeply within societal structures and processes.

In Barbados, efforts to implement Mission Barbados initially focused on central coordination from the Prime Minister's Office, the MBCC, and the Social Partners. These actors have worked to establish clear targets and strategic direction to mobilize action across the government and society. Moving forward, however, the challenge is to broaden participation and foster deeper local engagement. Initiatives such as the Parish Speaks series offer platforms for public dialogue and allow citizens to directly engage government officials on local and national concerns. Similarly, the Ideas Forum, launched in early 2025, represents an experimental approach to citizen participation, where residents actively propose policy ideas, positioning citizens at the centre of national development discussions (Shanna, 2025). The ongoing involvement of high-level officials, including the Prime Minister and Cabinet members, signals the government's commitment to supporting these participatory processes.

These initiatives directly support Mission 2 (Citizen empowerment), which aims for Barbados to become a nation of active, empowered citizens by 2030. The mission emphasizes citizen involvement in shaping social, economic, and cultural outcomes. Through platforms like Parish Speaks and the Ideas Forum, the Government is experimenting with practical tools to realize the goals of citizen empowerment. These forums provide valuable opportunities for citizens to influence policy-making processes actively. Looking ahead, additional opportunities exist to further engage sectors such as arts and culture (see Box 2), education, youth organizations, and faith-based communities. Expanding engagement across these areas can enhance local leadership and strengthen the foundations for lasting societal transformation.

An illustrative example of effective participation in mission-driven governance is Camden Council in the UK, which implemented the "We Make Camden" initiative (Camden Renewal Commission, 2021). Recognizing the importance of broad-based collective action, Camden Council repositioned itself as a steward rather than the sole leader of its mission agenda. The council successfully engaged diverse stakeholders, including businesses, community organizations, public sector entities, anchor institutions, and citizens. By appointing "mission champions" from the community, Camden encouraged local ownership and facilitated cross-sector collaboration to sustain the momentum of their missions. This experience underscores the value of community-driven leadership and active stakeholder participation for achieving enduring mission-oriented outcomes.

Box 2. Mobilising arts and culture as drivers of national renewal

The creative sector in Barbados offers a good example of how to mobilize participation through Mission Barbados in a new way. Arts and culture contribute significantly to economic growth on the island. Crop Over, Barbados's flagship festival, contributes an estimated \$80–\$100 million to the economy each year, and its return in 2022 after COVID-19 boosted GDP growth by 3.9 per cent (Barbados Today, 2021; Madden, 2022a). Other festivals, including the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) or the Food and Rum Festival, also create a surge of employment – scores of opportunities in event production, and hospitality – a multiplier effect that ripples across the economy.

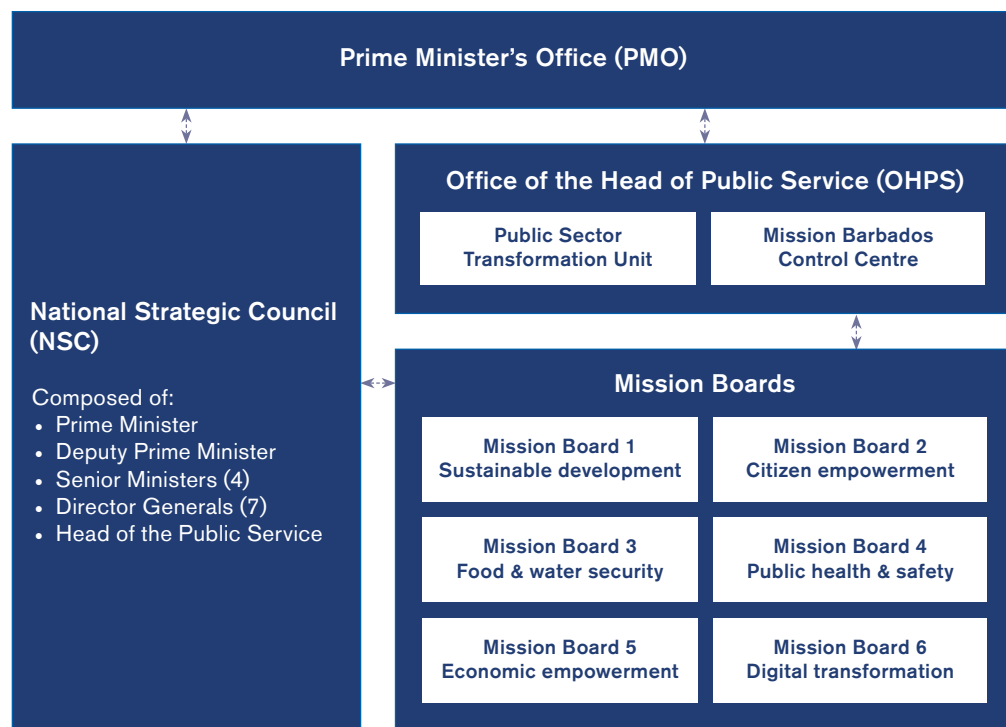
In the context of Mission Barbados, arts and culture are both an end in themselves – a flourishing creative sector that enriches the economy and empowers citizens – and a means to many other ends, from sustainable development to digital innovation. Mission 2 (Citizen empowerment) positions the creative sector as a critical area of focus for the government. Key elements include festivals, arts education, cultural infrastructure, and support for cultural entrepreneurs. One example is the Reclaiming Our Atlantic Destiny (ROAD) programme launched in 2021 to strengthen Barbados's cultural identity (Barbados Today, 2025). ROAD is digitizing archives and establishing a Heritage District – including an ancestral memorial, a national performing arts centre, a slavery heritage museum, and a new archive research facility. In this way, the arts fulfil a nation-building mission: creating spaces for dialogue, empathy, unity and the bolstering of self-esteem of citizens.

However, arts and culture can also act as a horizontal catalyst across other missions, strengthening participation and new forms of public imagination (Mazzucato, 2025b). A good example in the United States is the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which hired artists and writers during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Its arts projects not only provided jobs but also produced murals, guidebooks, and performances that promoted unity, preserved local history, and lifted public morale (Mazzucato, O'Connor, et al., 2025). Drawing on that lesson, Barbados could launch a "Creative Works Corps" to employ creatives on community art, documentation, and education projects to capture the public imagination around Mission Barbados. Arts and culture are not afterthoughts – they are central to national development.

3.3. Mission Boards

The Mission Boards, which help govern the missions, were designed with a commitment to partnership and participation. In Barbados, the formal governance of Mission Barbados is led by four core players: the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the newly established National Strategic Council (NSC), the Office of the Head of Public Service (OHPS), and the Mission Boards. The PMO holds wide-ranging authority and oversees key portfolios such as Finance, Economic Affairs, Investment, National Security, and Public Service Reform. The NSC serves as the top-level policy body, chaired by the Prime Minister, and comprises the Deputy Prime Minister, Senior Ministers, the Head of the Public Service, and Directors General. It oversees the country's six national missions through the leadership of the four senior ministers who sit on the Council. The OHPS, reporting to both the PMO and the NSC, coordinates mission implementation and drives public service transformation. Finally, the Mission Boards approve mission workplans and help resolve any bottlenecks in execution. They are at the heart of the process, translating the principles of partnership and participation discussed above into formal structures with clear protocols.

Figure 3. Architecture to coordinate Mission Barbados



Three features of this architecture stand out. First, there is high-level and cross-ministerial oversight by two powerful bodies: PMO and NSC. At the time of writing this report, NSC is now starting to function, so the Cabinet was fulfilling hitherto its role in providing high-level oversight. The Cabinet meets weekly, which helps ensure timely decisions on mission-related issues. The OHPS has direct reporting lines to both the PMO and the NSC, ensuring that coordination is maintained at the highest levels. However, the coordination between the PMO and the MBCC, which sits in the OHPS and effectively serves as the secretariat for Mission Barbados, could be improved. Ideally, a PMO representative should be embedded within the MBCC to strengthen communication and oversight.

Second, the Mission Boards are cross-sectoral and cross-ministerial by design. Each Mission Board is chaired by a Senior Minister who holds broad “super-ministerial” responsibilities spanning multiple ministries and sectors; these include Governance, the Productive sectors, Social and Environmental policy, and Infrastructure. Alongside the Senior Minister, each board’s membership includes relevant Directors General and representatives from Social Partners, who contribute sector-specific expertise and perspectives. Thanks to this high-level and diverse composition, the Mission Boards are empowered to act as decision-making bodies with the authority to guide and approve mission initiatives, rather than merely serving as advisory or deliberative forums.

Third, the OHPS brings together government modernization and mission coordination. Within OHPS, the MBCC functions as the operational hub for mission delivery, coordinating meetings, communications, dashboards, delivery plans, and public relations. At the same time, the OHPS oversees the ongoing modernization of the civil service: all permanent secretaries report to the OHPS and it manages human resources and staffing across all ministries. This integration is essential because mission implementation relies on a professional, well-resourced civil service with the skills to deliver. However, OHPS itself is understaffed and finds it difficult to successfully deliver on its broad mandate. Any government implementing missions should ensure that the body responsible for mission coordination be effectively staffed and resourced.

Recommendations for Section 3:

- 1. Prioritise the Social Partnership as the central mechanism for whole-of-country coordination:** Strengthen the Social Partnership's role in mission implementation by clearly embedding mission-oriented principles into future agreements and compacts. Ensure that major national initiatives explicitly integrate these principles, fostering trust, coherence, and collective ownership across government, business, and labour.
- 2. Mobilise citizens and communities through innovative engagement platforms:** Expand citizen participation beyond existing forums like Parish Speaks and the Ideas Forum, including launching a national Mission Champions Program or Creative Works Corps. This Corps should engage local artists, cultural practitioners, and community members to document, promote, and actively participate in mission-related projects.
- 3. Empower Mission Boards as primary decision-making entities for mission governance:** Maintain the Mission Boards as authoritative bodies with clear mandates to guide, approve, and oversee mission-related initiatives. Reinforce their cross-sectoral composition with consistent buy-in from Senior Ministers, Directors General, and Social Partners with explicit decision-making roles, while strengthening operational linkages to the Prime Minister's Office and the National Strategic Council.

4. FINANCIAL TOOLS

Prime Minister Mottley has spearheaded efforts to reform the international financial architecture through the Bridgetown Initiative (Bridgetown Initiative, 2024). This initiative is designed to restructure global financial systems to better support climate-vulnerable nations in their efforts to build climate resilience and achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Off the back of its 2022 debt-for-nature swap and 2024 debt-for-climate swap, Barbados is set to be the first nation to utilize a new standardized debt-for-resilience facility backed by major development banks, aiming to channel savings from high-interest debt payments into development projects (Jones, 2025). This role not only highlights Barbados's international leadership but also underscores its reliable and innovative financial governance at the national level.

Growth requires investment that can expand the productive capacity of the economy. If a government wants directed growth – growth that is inclusive and sustainable – then it requires directed investment (Mazzucato, 2013, 2018a, 2023a). Over the past decade, the Government of Barbados has made effective public spending decisions that follow a clear logic: public investment can mobilize private investment and shape markets if it is done in a strategic way. For example, in 2024, the government launched the Barbados Investment Plan, a 10-year roadmap that aimed to mobilize US\$11.6 billion by 2035, a figure twice the size of the government's current gross domestic product (GDP) (Government of Barbados, 2024a). The plan is a statement of intent to direct growth through market opportunities aligned with the country's six missions. It provides a clear overview of how much finance needs to be mobilized from public, private, and international sources. Barbados is paving the way in using new methods to mobilize and shape finance at the national and international levels.

4.1. International sources of finance

Countries need enough fiscal space to create investment-led growth. The Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank have created this breathing room through effective debt management. In Barbados, an unprecedented sovereign debt restructuring in 2018–2019 helped reduce the public debt from roughly 177 per cent of GDP to approximately 120 per cent by the end of 2019, swapping costly short-term debt for longer maturities at lower rates (Anthony et al., 2020). Crucially, natural disaster clauses were inserted into new bonds, allowing for a

two-year debt payment moratorium after severe hurricanes to safeguard fiscal space for emergencies. These measures dramatically cut debt servicing costs: annual interest payments fell from 26.9 per cent of government revenue in FY2017/18 to just 10.3 per cent by FY2020/21 (Central Bank of Barbados, 2020). This fiscal reprieve freed up resources for public investment. Even amid the BERT programme and an IMF-backed adjustment program, Barbados protected and even enhanced its social spending – funding training programs and safety nets for vulnerable citizens – aligning fiscal consolidation with citizen empowerment (IMF, 2019).

However, it is not only the quantity of finance that matters, but also the quality of finance (Mazzucato, 2023b, 2025c). The Government has secured patient, long-term finance from multilateral partners with low interest rates. For example, Barbados became one of the first countries to access the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust, unlocking US\$183 million in 20-year, low-interest financing to build climate resilience (IMF, 2022). The Government has also obtained concessional, long-term development loans – such as a US\$80 million Inter-American Development Bank loan with a 20-year term to support sustainable infrastructure and policy reforms – ensuring that external funding is patient and affordable (IDB, 2020). Additionally, partners like the Green Climate Fund have provided grants (for example, US\$40 million in 2024 in a debt-for-climate swap) to bolster climate-related investments on highly favourable terms. Importantly, the Government's approach to risk goes beyond “de-risking” projects for private capital; it emphasizes the sharing of risks and rewards through innovative public–private relationships and guarantee schemes, so that stakeholders jointly bear the risks and benefit from the rewards of transformative projects.

To tackle ambitious public policy objectives, financing needs to be directed towards the country's missions. The Government is experimenting with new international financial tools to help create this directionality. In 2022, the Government launched a debt-for-nature swap (blue bond) valued at US\$150 million, refinancing part of its debt on better terms (Wakefield Adhya, 2022). This deal, supported by guarantees from The Nature Conservancy and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), is expected to save about US\$50 million in debt payments over 15 years, with the savings earmarked for marine conservation – including expanding marine protected areas in Barbados's territorial waters (Wakefield Adhya, 2022). Similarly, in 2024 Barbados completed the world's first debt-for-climate-resilience swap, with debt service savings being directed to specific Capital Project for a major water reclamation facility (to double the water supply by 2050) and to benefit climate-smart agriculture programs in the South East of the Island directly advancing Mission 3 (Food and water security) (Furness, 2024).

Box 2. Linking international finance with food and water security

Barbados' recent debt-for-climate swap shows how the island is strategically linking international sources of finance with its six missions. Barbados is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world, relying on groundwater for roughly 90 per cent of its supply, with around 80 per cent drawn from shallow coastal aquifers vulnerable to saltwater intrusion from rising sea levels, and facing non-revenue water leakages of approximately 40 per cent (Bradshaw, 2023). The Global Commission on the Economics of Water has demonstrated that these short-term local water supply challenges are now being compounded by longer-term changes to global water supply issues, with drought and climate change increasingly constraining the country's freshwater resources (Global Commission on the Economics of Water, 2024).

The Government crafted its third mission to tackle these challenges, recognising that food and water insecurity are deeply interlinked. Mission 3 (food and water security) takes an integrated approach, aiming to augment water supply, improve water system efficiency, and promote sustainable agricultural water use (Mazzucato & Kuehn von Burgsdorff, 2025). For example, Barbados launched the South Coast Water Reclamation and Reuse Project to treat wastewater for irrigation and aquifer recharge (IDB, 2024). This project is expected to more than double the island's available water supply by providing 50,000 people with improved wastewater services and 210 farmers with a reliable source of irrigation water. Expanding water reuse also yields public health co-benefits by reducing sewage pollution and improving sanitation.

In 2024, the Government completed the world's first debt-for-climate swap (Furness, 2024). This innovative debt conversion repurposed approximately BBD 592.7 million of high-interest debt into a new low-interest loan, reducing debt service and freeing up funds for climate adaptation projects (Central Bank of Barbados, 2025). Supported by guarantees from the IDB and European Investment Bank, along with Green Climate Fund financing, the swap is expected to save approximately US\$220 million in interest over the next decade. Barbados is redirecting these savings into Mission 3 priorities, notably the South Coast Water Reclamation Project and related investments in water infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration.

4.2. Outcomes-oriented budgeting

Aligning the annual budgeting process with mission-oriented goals is an effective way to ensure Government resources directly support strategic priorities. By clearly linking the funding allocations of each Ministry, Department, and Agency to measurable performance indicators and long-term outcomes, governments can strengthen the connection between financial resources and policy objectives.

The Government of Barbados is actively experimenting with aligning its annual budget process to the objectives set out in Mission Barbados. Traditionally, this budget process follows four stages: preparation, Cabinet approval, parliamentary debate, and implementation. It begins with the Ministry of Finance instructing ministries to submit draft spending proposals (estimates), which are reviewed by an Estimates Committee chaired by the Minister of Finance. These estimates ideally align with Barbados's Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy and include Commitment for Results (CFRs), intended to integrate performance measures into budget planning by explicitly connecting funding requests to key performance indicators (KPIs). Cabinet subsequently aligns and approves these estimates, followed by parliamentary debate and approval through the Appropriation Bill. The approved budget is then executed, monitored throughout the fiscal year, and audited by the auditor-general (Government of Barbados, 2002, 2019).

In 2024, the Government committed to aligning the annual budget with Mission Barbados (Government of Barbados, 2024b). In principle, this means Ministries are required to clarify how the activities outlined in their CFRs are connected to one or more of the six missions. In practice, as with many governments undertaking similar transformations, this alignment represents a significant challenge: CFR adoption and oversight mechanisms are still developing and require further refinement. While recent budget proposals have highlighted Mission Barbados as a central framework, effectively embedding mission alignment into the technical budgeting process remains an ongoing exercise that will require sustained commitment and learning (Budgetary Proposals and Financial Statement, 2025).

New Zealand's Wellbeing Budget, introduced in 2019, is a good example of how to align budgeting with long-term societal outcomes (Government of New Zealand, 2019). The approach identified five priority areas, including improving mental health and reducing child poverty. Agencies collaborated

closely, explicitly tying funding requests to measurable wellbeing targets. While evaluation is continuing, early assessments indicate enhanced cross-agency coordination and improved service delivery. In fact, the 2019 Budget allocated NZ\$1.9 billion for mental health initiatives, significantly expanded free healthcare for children, and increased welfare benefits. New Zealand's experience highlights the opportunity to transition from traditional project-focused budgets towards outcomes-oriented budgeting.

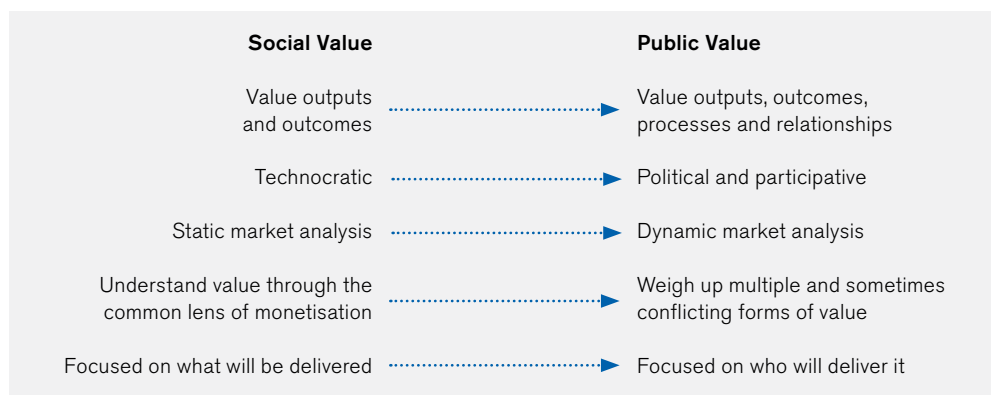
The Brazilian city of Porto Alegre provides an equally relevant example of how to rethink government budgeting (World Bank, 2008). Porto Alegre pioneered participatory budgeting (PB) in 1989, enabling citizens to directly influence public spending decisions. Under this approach, community members regularly come together in public forums to discuss and decide on priorities for municipal investments, ranging from basic infrastructure like roads and sanitation, to education and healthcare services. By democratising budget allocation through citizen engagement, participatory budgeting has resulted in significant improvements in public accountability, social equity, and transparency. Over its first decade, PB led to notable advances in service delivery, including substantial increases in household connections to water and sewage systems. Porto Alegre's experience demonstrates that outcomes-oriented budgeting can be strengthened when combined with meaningful citizen participation, highlighting how budget processes can drive both responsive governance and tangible societal outcomes

4.3. Outcomes-oriented procurement

Public procurement has significant untapped potential as a tool to support strategic policy objectives and create broader public value. While traditional procurement practices typically emphasize minimizing cost, managing risk, and prioritizing efficiency, fairness, and transparency, there is growing recognition globally that procurement can also be strategically leveraged to shape markets, drive innovation, and deliver broader social and environmental outcomes. However, realizing this potential requires a shift away from a narrow, transaction-focused paradigm towards a more intentional, outcomes-oriented, and collaborative model, one that moves beyond merely adding 'social value' to individual contracts and instead seeks to deliver broader 'public value' aligned with overarching strategic goals (Mazzucato, Spanó, et al., 2025; Mazzucato & Wainwright, 2024).

Barbados is actively experimenting with procurement reform as part of its broader economic and state transformation agendas. Historically, procurement processes in Barbados were paper-based, which caused delays and inefficiencies. In response, the Government of Barbados has started experimenting with digitisation, piloting an e-procurement platform (Bonfire) in 2023 following the introduction of the Public Procurement Act of 2021 (Emmanuel, 2023; Parliament of Barbados, 2021). This platform aims to streamline and increase transparency in the tendering process by enabling suppliers to register and Ministries to manage bids electronically. The 2023 Amendment to the Procurement Act represents an important commitment, explicitly mandating ministries to use procurement to promote broader socio-economic goals (Parliament of Barbados, 2023). However, like many other governments, Barbados faces the ongoing challenge of integrating broader public value goals systematically into procurement processes. Ensuring that Ministries understand how procurement practices can be strategically leveraged to achieve mission-oriented outcomes requires continued experimentation and sustained capacity-building.

Figure 4. A public value and mission-driven approach to procurement



Camden Council (UK) and Brazil, two governments with whom the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP) has worked, offer instructive examples of experimenting with mission-oriented procurement practices. In Camden, procurement was explicitly linked to a clearly defined mission for community sustainability, wellbeing, and creativity on local housing estates. Camden adopted a public value-based approach to procurement and piloted procurement strategies that directly integrated mission-aligned criteria into the selection of suppliers for adult social care. This encouraged collaboration among procurement officers, providers, and mission leaders to foster broader community wellbeing (Mazzucato & Wainwright, 2024; see Figure 4). In Brazil, the Government has

been experimenting with procurement as part of its wider state transformation agenda, recognizing the tool's potential to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Brazil's new procurement strategies aim explicitly at mission-oriented outcomes, emphasizing the alignment of procurement with national policy priorities and ensuring interministerial coordination (Mazzucato, 2025d). These examples underscore the importance of moving beyond narrow cost-management approaches and demonstrate how intentional, mission-aligned procurement strategies can deliver broader economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

Reforms to these financial tools should be accompanied by sustained investment in building the capacities and capabilities within Government, as many governments, including Barbados's, face ongoing challenges in ensuring sufficient absorptive capacity to effectively implement projects and deliver on commitments.

Recommendations for Section 4:

- 1. Align international finance strategically with mission goals:** Systematically link concessional finance (e.g., from IDB, EIB, and Green Climate Fund) and innovative financial mechanisms (e.g., debt-for-climate and debt-for-nature swaps) to specific mission priorities. Establish explicit criteria within future financing agreements to ensure investments directly support specific outcome indicators.
- 2. Fully embed outcomes-oriented budgeting across government:** Institutionalise the practice of explicitly linking annual ministry budget allocations to measurable, mission-aligned outcomes. Strengthen the Commitment for Results (CFR) process by clarifying guidelines, providing training for civil servants, and rigorously reviewing CFR submissions to ensure meaningful alignment with mission objectives.
- 3. Experiment with new approaches to outcomes-oriented public procurement:** Expand ongoing procurement reforms – building on the 2023 Amendment to the Procurement Act – by systematically embedding mission-oriented outcomes into procurement criteria. Train procurement officers across Ministries to establish clear protocols for mission-aligned supplier selection and evaluation, transforming procurement into a strategic tool that proactively shapes markets and advances broader societal goals.

5. PUBLIC SECTOR CAPABILITIES

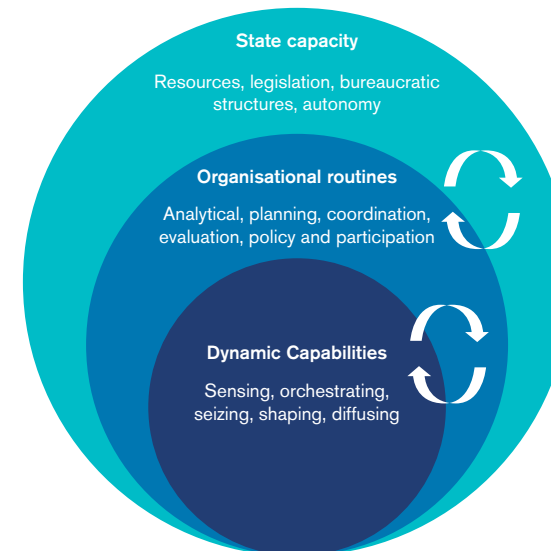
Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley has explicitly urged a fundamental overhaul of Barbados's public sector, likening the task to reconstructing government by first deconstructing (and decolonizing) its legacy systems. She argues that Barbados (and the wider Caribbean) still operates with outdated, colonial-era structures – effectively “a 21st century population, functioning with a 20th century and in some instances, a 19th century government” (Barbados Today, 2015).

A key challenge for many governments, including Barbados's, is that political and fiscal pressures can lead to a short-term, ‘deliver now’ mindset in government, which can come at the expense of investing in sustainable institutional capacity. There is often an urgency to show quick wins, whether through visible projects or immediate service improvements. For example, Barbados's Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) programme (signed in 2018 and 2022 with the IMF) improved short-term fiscal stability but also mandated austerity measures, including layoffs and wage bill cuts, that reduced the size of the civil service (ECLAC, 2019). Although this created immediate savings, it also left Ministries with leaner staffing and heavier workloads. The task for governments is to balance short-term implementation with strategic investments in people and processes that build and retain long-term capacity. Without this balance, countries risk a cycle of quick fixes that do not address underlying weaknesses in its public sector.

To navigate these challenges effectively, Kattel et al.'s (2024) three-tiered framework for public sector capabilities provides a useful high-level overview (see Figure 5 below). The framework comprises: (1) state capacities, referring to foundational elements such as coherent bureaucratic structures, financial resources, and institutional autonomy; (2) organizational routines, which are stable practices embedded in public institutions encompassing analytical, planning, coordination, evaluation, policy-making, and participatory functions; and (3) dynamic capabilities, the abilities embedded in organizational routines enabling institutions to adapt resources, processes, and skills to respond strategically to evolving challenges.

This section investigates three public sector capabilities that can help with the implementation of Mission Barbados: digital government, interministerial coordination, and experimentation.

Figure 5. State capacities, organizational routines, and dynamic capabilities of the public sector (Kattel et al., 2024)



5.1. Digital government

Governments around the world face increasing pressure to build strong digital public capabilities to meet growing demands from citizens. People now expect government services to be as convenient and fast as the best online banking or retail apps, yet many public institutions still rely on outdated, siloed systems. In Barbados, for example, the national Land Registry remains largely paper-based, and the Licensing Authority recently used robotic process automation to patch an aging system – a stopgap measure that highlighted the need for deeper digital reform (Sehmi & Bracken, 2025). In response to these challenges, Governments should prioritize investments in digital public infrastructure and create dedicated digital agencies (Kattel & Takala, 2021; Mazzucato et al., 2024). By treating platforms like digital identification, payments, and data-sharing as fundamental utilities and by developing in-house digital teams, states can modernize how they serve citizens in the 21st century.

Barbados is taking steps to build digital capacity. The Government recently established GovTech Barbados as a dedicated agency to support the government's digital transformation (GovTech Barbados, 2025). GovTech's objective is to overcome fragmentation by developing shared solutions and standards across government. Its mandate includes working with other MDAs to build core systems like a national digital ID for single sign-on to e-services,

a modernized payments platform for all fees, and a data exchange for secure information sharing between departments. GovTech is also working with Ministries to redesign key services around user needs. Instead of large one-off IT projects, it aims to deploy small multidisciplinary teams using agile methods to engage users, simplify processes, and continuously improve services. Bringing digital talent in-house and building common infrastructure is meant to reduce reliance on vendors and instil a more dynamic, user-focused culture. This shift signals the Government's commitment to break down silos and try new approaches.

Brazil provides a useful example of how robust digital public infrastructure can transform service delivery (Mazzucato, Eaves, & Pagliarini, 2024). Brazil's federal Government has unified most public services through its central Gov.br platform. By 2020, nearly 90 per cent of federal services were accessible online via this one portal, and over 150 million Brazilians have created a Gov.br digital account for secure access. The Government also introduced an instant payments system called Pix in 2020, which now processes around US\$300 billion in transactions each month and even delivers welfare payments (such as through the Bolsa Família program) to approximately 14 million low-income families. These innovations show how shared digital tools, like a single online identity and fast payment rails, can greatly improve the convenience, inclusiveness, and efficiency of public services.

Furthermore, the experience of the United Kingdom illustrates what a dedicated digital agency can achieve. In 2011 the UK government set up the Government Digital Service (GDS) as a central team to drive digital modernization (Kattel & Takala, 2021). The GDS merged thousands of departmental websites into a single site (gov.uk) for all government services, making access much easier for citizens. It also introduced common digital tools and standards across departments, improving consistency and reducing duplication. By bringing digital experts into the Civil Service and using agile methods, the UK rapidly expanded and improved its online services. These efforts yielded substantial benefits: user satisfaction rose, and the Government saved billions of pounds by digitizing processes and retiring legacy systems. The GDS model shows that strong internal capacity and leadership can drive a more coherent, citizen-centric digital government. Barbados's creation of GovTech reflects a similar aspiration to modernize services and build lasting digital capability in the public sector.

5.2. Interministerial coordination

Inter-ministerial coordination is essential for implementing mission-oriented policies effectively because missions cut across sectors and traditional ministerial boundaries. Without robust coordination mechanisms, governments risk fragmentation, duplication of effort, and inefficiencies. Effective coordination enables alignment of goals, streamlining of decision-making processes, and more agile responses to emerging challenges.

The Mission Boards established under Mission Barbados embody this commitment to comprehensive and cross-sectoral coordination. Each Board is chaired by a Senior Minister whose responsibilities span multiple sectors, enabling a "super-ministerial" approach designed to overcome traditional silos. Board membership further includes Directors General and representatives from the Social Partners, who bring diverse expertise that is critical for mission alignment. Rather than being merely advisory, these Boards have decision-making authority, which allows them to guide and approve mission initiatives actively. However, maintaining clarity in roles and responsibilities between the Mission Boards, the Prime Minister's Office, and the National Strategic Council, all of which play important coordination roles, remains a challenge that is common to many Governments experimenting with new types of coordination frameworks. Strengthening the operational linkages and communication channels among these entities will be important in ensuring effective and sustained mission governance.

Similarly, capacity-building coordination across Government requires clear delineation and integration of roles. The OHPS, positioned at the nexus of mission coordination and civil service modernization, leads the broader strategic agenda for public sector transformation. Within the OHPS, the MBCC supports day-to-day mission delivery through managing operational logistics, communications, and monitoring frameworks. Several other entities, such as the Efficiency Unit, GovTech Barbados, the MTTE, and the Ministry of the Public Service (MPS), also hold mandates for building public sector capabilities. While each organization contributes to the Government's overall modernization efforts, coordination among these actors remains challenging, with risks of overlapping responsibilities or fragmented initiatives. For instance, while GovTech Barbados prioritizes rapid implementation and iterative service delivery, the Efficiency Unit has taken a more measured approach, mapping internal processes in depth. There is a case for a review of the role of the Efficiency Unit and where best its mandate may be executed. The OHPS is actively working to align these

efforts, particularly through collaboration with the MTTE and the MPS, ensuring that capacity-building activities support coherent modernization objectives. Ultimately, successful capacity-building coordination will depend on continued clarification of institutional roles and accountability structures, enabling the government to leverage collective expertise in pursuit of its missions.

5.3. Experimentation

Experimentation is an important dynamic capability for public sectors seeking effective responses to complex societal challenges. For example, governments can adopt regulatory sandboxes, policy pilots, and innovation labs to test and learn from new approaches to policy. These different initiatives allow governments to explore new solutions in a controlled environment, reducing risks associated with larger-scale implementation and fostering an adaptive governance culture necessary for tackling persistent and emergent issues effectively.

While structural capacity and solid routines form the backbone of the civil service, dynamic capabilities – the public sector’s ability to learn, adapt, and innovate in response to new challenges – are equally important. In Barbados, there are only a few pockets of experimentation in the public service, including Future Barbados. Future Barbados brands itself as a public innovation hub that brings together local talent, new ideas, and government resources to advance new solutions to pressing challenges. However, it is still a relatively small-scale institution.

Local and state-level governments in Australia offer instructive insights into how public sectors can institutionalize experimentation effectively (Kattel et al., 2025). Regulatory sandboxes – controlled environments to pilot new policies and policy approaches before broader rollout – have become particularly popular. For example, both New South Wales and South Australia have utilized sandboxes to test innovations in areas such as e-micromobility, allowing policymakers to refine regulations and frameworks through iterative trials. This sandboxing approach helps governments address policy uncertainty, manage risks proactively, and learn from practical experiences before scaling solutions, which illustrates a structured and deliberate approach to policy experimentation.

Recommendations for Section 5:

- 1. Empower GovTech Barbados as the central digital public agency:**
Equip GovTech with sufficient resources, dedicated staffing, and clear authority to collaboratively redesign core public services around citizen needs, significantly improving government responsiveness and service delivery.
- 2. Invest systematically in shared digital public infrastructure:**
Accelerate investments in foundational digital infrastructure – including the Digital ID, National Digital Payments Structure due by March 2026, and secure data-sharing protocols – to serve as cross-cutting resources supporting all ministries and missions.
- 3. Clarify and coordinate roles in public sector capacity building:**
Define clear responsibilities and strengthen coordination among key institutions – including the Office of the Head of the Public Service (OHPS), GovTech Barbados, Efficiency Unit, Ministry of Training and Tertiary Education (MTTE), National Transformation Unit (NTU), and Ministry of the Public Service (MPS) – to avoid overlapping mandates. Establish formal mechanisms for regular collaboration and joint planning, ensuring consistent alignment of capacity-building initiatives with Mission Barbados’s long-term strategic objectives.
- 4. Expand the use of policy experimentation tools, such as sandboxes:**
Introduce structured experimentation frameworks, including regulatory sandboxes, innovation labs, and policy pilots, to test, refine, and scale innovative policy solutions.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Effective monitoring and evaluation is itself an important public sector capability. Specifically, a dashboard of economic, social and environmental indicators can be used for monitoring the success of missions. Far from relying on just one number to sense-check the health of the economy (GDP, for example) a dashboard can give a more holistic and multi-dimensional litmus test, while providing a clear overview of progress being made on each mission (Mazzucato, 2021; Mazzucato et al., 2020).

The Declaration of Mission Barbados recognizes the need for better data, as the Social Partners endorse developing “a dashboard of baseline measurements and economic and non-economic indicators to monitor the success of each Mission” (Government of Barbados, 2023a). The MBCC is responsible for developing, managing, and monitoring this dashboard, with the aim of providing real-time insights, supporting data-driven decision-making and iteration, and enhancing transparency, participation, and engagement. However, three challenges make it difficult to embed monitoring and evaluation into the government decision-making process: a narrow view of monitoring as an accountability mechanism, a short-term focus on outputs, and a weak data infrastructure.

First, adopting an outcomes-oriented approach to monitoring and evaluation requires a broader shift in governance – from a traditional static framework to a more adaptive, learning-driven framework (Mazzucato et al., 2020). In conventional public administration, accountability is often about faithfully executing a predetermined plan (following budgets, timelines, and output targets) and then evaluating at the end whether those activities were completed. While such traditional accountability mechanisms (such as annual performance reports or audits) can ensure diligence, they can also create rigidity. Agencies may be hesitant to deviate from initial plans or admit a course correction is needed for fear of being seen as failing to meet targets. This approach is ill-suited for complex, mission-oriented initiatives that address ‘wicked’ problems (like climate resilience, social inclusion, etc.), where solutions are not linear or obvious from the start. Missions provide a North Star vision – a clear goal to aim for – but the path to that goal is uncharted and requires experimentation (Hill, 2022). This creates a need for adaptive governance; that is, the ability to iteratively refine policies based on real-time feedback and learning.

Second, effective monitoring and evaluation also requires rethinking what is measured (Mazzucato et al., 2020). It is vital to focus on outcomes versus outputs in tracking progress. It is always easier for governments to look at outputs – the immediate products of an activity (for example, number of workshops held, or kilometres of road built). Outputs are important, but they are fundamentally means to an end. Outcomes, by contrast, represent the changes or benefits that occur as a result of those outputs. An output might be 50 people trained in financial literacy; the desired outcome would be an increase in financial literacy levels in the population. In the context of Mission Barbados, each of the six missions are articulated in terms of transformative outcomes by 2030. For example, Mission 5 (Economic Empowerment) is deliberately framed around outcome targets rather than just outputs. It seeks broad improvements in the economic enfranchisement and empowerment of citizens, workers, and businesses, as reflected in its four sub-targets: (1) a 50 per cent reduction in the rate of poverty; (2) a 22 per cent increase in the provision of affordable and resilient housing; (3) reducing unemployment to below 5 per cent; and (4) reducing the number of people seeking welfare support. Thus, economic empowerment becomes a multi-dimensional policy problem requiring multi-dimensional policy solutions (for an example, see Box 5).

Third, a robust data infrastructure is essential for effective monitoring and evaluation. Many governments, including Barbados's, face ongoing challenges with data availability, quality, and sharing. In some instances, datasets are incomplete or outdated; for example, the agricultural census in Barbados has not been conducted since 1989, resulting in a significant gap in critical agricultural data (Adaptation Fund, 2024). Such gaps create difficulties for evidence-based policymaking, as decision-makers must often operate without comprehensive information on areas such as farm sizes, production volumes, and farmer demographics. Additionally, data tend to be collected in varied formats across Ministries, leading to incompatibility and fragmentation. Strengthening the Barbados Statistical Service (BSS) represents one immediate opportunity to begin addressing these data challenges. As the national statistics agency, supported by the Barbados National Standards Institution, the BSS could lead efforts to standardize data collection methodologies and facilitate shared, accessible databases for stakeholders. Recent initiatives, such as the National Summary Data Page, which centralizes macroeconomic indicators, reflect the government's commitment to experimenting with and improving data accessibility (IMF, 2021). If these efforts can be expanded beyond macroeconomic data, it may positively impact broader public policy objectives.

Box 5. The One Family Programme's multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction

The government's One Family Programme shows how a multi-dimensional definition of poverty leads to a multi-dimensional response. Poverty remains a persistent and multi-faceted challenge in Barbados. The latest comprehensive survey was conducted in 2016 and showed a national poverty rate of 17.2 per cent (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2022). Barbados's poverty challenge is multi-dimensional, entwined with employment, education, housing quality, and access to finance (Government of Barbados, 2025a).

In response, the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs launched the One Family Programme in 2022 (Government of Barbados, 2025a). One Family's core goal is to empower the country's poorest households – moving people from dependency to self-reliance – through a tailored intervention that addresses multiple facets of deprivation. The programme uses a multidimensional “Eligibility Scorecard” to rank each household's level of poverty across various criteria. These include household income relative to the poverty line, the state of housing (such as overcrowding or physical condition), educational attainment of members, health status of family members, household size/dependents, and access to basic amenities like water and electricity. The initial focus is on 1,000 vulnerable families, identified as the neediest based on the scorecard, with the intent to expand in phases.

Beyond its immediate benefits, the One Family Programme represents a paradigm shift in Barbados's social policy; it is a move toward a new welfare state model that differs markedly from traditional welfare programmes (Cottam, 2018). First, it is people-centric and holistic; each family's plan is tailored to their life goals and challenges, cutting across traditional service boundaries. Second, One Family leverages community and peer support as integral parts of the welfare solution. The “Each One, Reach One” slogan signals that improving lives is a shared societal mission, not the sole domain of government social services. Third, the One Family Programme emphasizes capability and dignity, which are hallmarks of a new welfare paradigm. Finally, from an institutional standpoint, One Family is part of a broader reform of Barbados's welfare state architecture. The Government has moved toward integrated service delivery: steps have been taken to consolidate formerly separate agencies (such as the Welfare Department, National Assistance Board, Child Care Board, and others) under a more unified social services umbrella, namely the Social Empowerment Agency. The legislation has passed and the transition has commenced.

Recommendations for Section 6:

- 1. Adopt an adaptive, learning-driven framework to manage the Mission Barbados dashboard:** Transition from rigid, accountability-focused evaluations toward iterative, adaptive governance frameworks that encourage ongoing learning and refinement of policies. Use the Mission Barbados dashboard to enable agencies to dynamically adjust their approaches based on emerging evidence and changing circumstances.
- 2. Prioritise measuring outcomes through multi-dimensional indicators:** Systematically shift monitoring practices from output-based metrics to outcomes-focused, multi-dimensional indicators reflecting real societal impacts. Clearly link these indicators to each the key performance indicators (KPIs) of activities, initiatives, and policies across government.
- 3. Build robust, integrated data infrastructure:** Strengthen the Barbados Statistical Service (BSS) and the Barbados National Standards Institution (BNSI) to enhance data quality, availability, and interoperability across Ministries and sectors. Prioritise investment in updated and comprehensive datasets (e.g., conducting regular agricultural censuses and standardising data collection methodologies), while creating secure platforms for seamless data-sharing.

7. CONCLUSION

Barbados' recent journey demonstrates how a small nation – a large ocean state – can drive big change through clear, bold vision. In response to global uncertainties and local challenges, Barbados has committed to exploring a new development pathway. Through Mission Barbados, the Government is attempting to align economic, social, and environmental objectives. Rather than isolated solutions, the Government is experimenting with holistic, integrated approaches to achieve longer-term impact. These efforts reflect an ongoing commitment to learning, adaptation, and collaboration across departments in government and across sectors in the economy.

Our joint work with the Government of Barbados has unearthed five areas that can help transform the country's challenges into opportunities for investment, innovation, and collaboration. First, policy should be designed with a clear focus on achieving transformative outcomes rather than merely delivering short-term outputs. Second, the adoption of a whole-of-government and whole-of-economy approach can improve the coordination between Ministries and between the Social Partners working towards shared goals. Third, innovative financing mechanisms and reallocating national budgeting towards the six missions can help the Government align and get the most out of its available financing. Fourth, strengthening public sector capabilities should remain a key area of focus with new institutions, skill-building initiatives, and digital tools such as GovTech Barbados serving as enablers of the transformation agenda. Lastly, monitoring and evaluation should be front and centre, providing frameworks for tracking progress and adapting policies based on real-time feedback.

As implementation of Mission Barbados moves forward, early initiatives indicate an ongoing commitment to an integrated approach. Programmes such as Roofs to Reefs and One Family illustrate attempts at cross-sector collaboration. These build on other cross-cutting approaches that were driven by overcoming national crises (such as saving the fixed exchange rate and confronting the Covid-19 pandemic as a heavily tourism dependent economy). This national approach to complex national issues will always lay platform for success. These initiatives demonstrate potential for positive outcomes and highlight the ongoing nature of transformation. Achieving lasting change will require sustained commitment, further development of institutional capabilities, an openness to adaptive learning, and consistent efforts to maintain trust and cooperation across the Social Partners and other members of society.

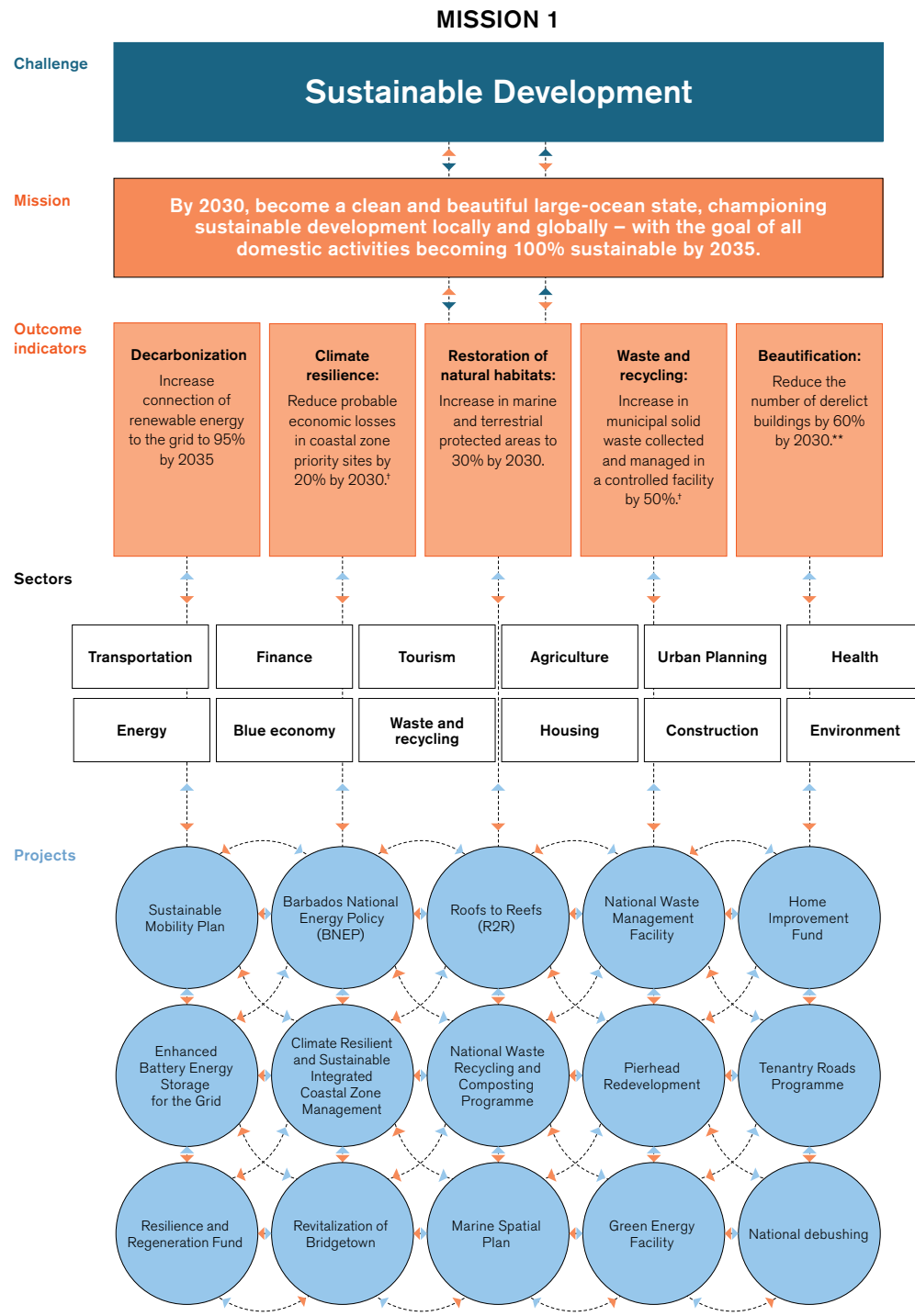
Barbados' ongoing experience underscores the importance of setting ambitious objectives while realistically acknowledging the challenges involved. The Government has laid foundational efforts aimed at supporting long-term reforms, recognizing that perseverance and continual adaptation will be critical. The future will test the strength of these commitments, but Barbados has the potential to serve as an example of how a commitment to new approaches and a readiness to adapt can help address complex local and global challenges. The willingness to transform collectively remains the greatest asset for any country aiming to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth.

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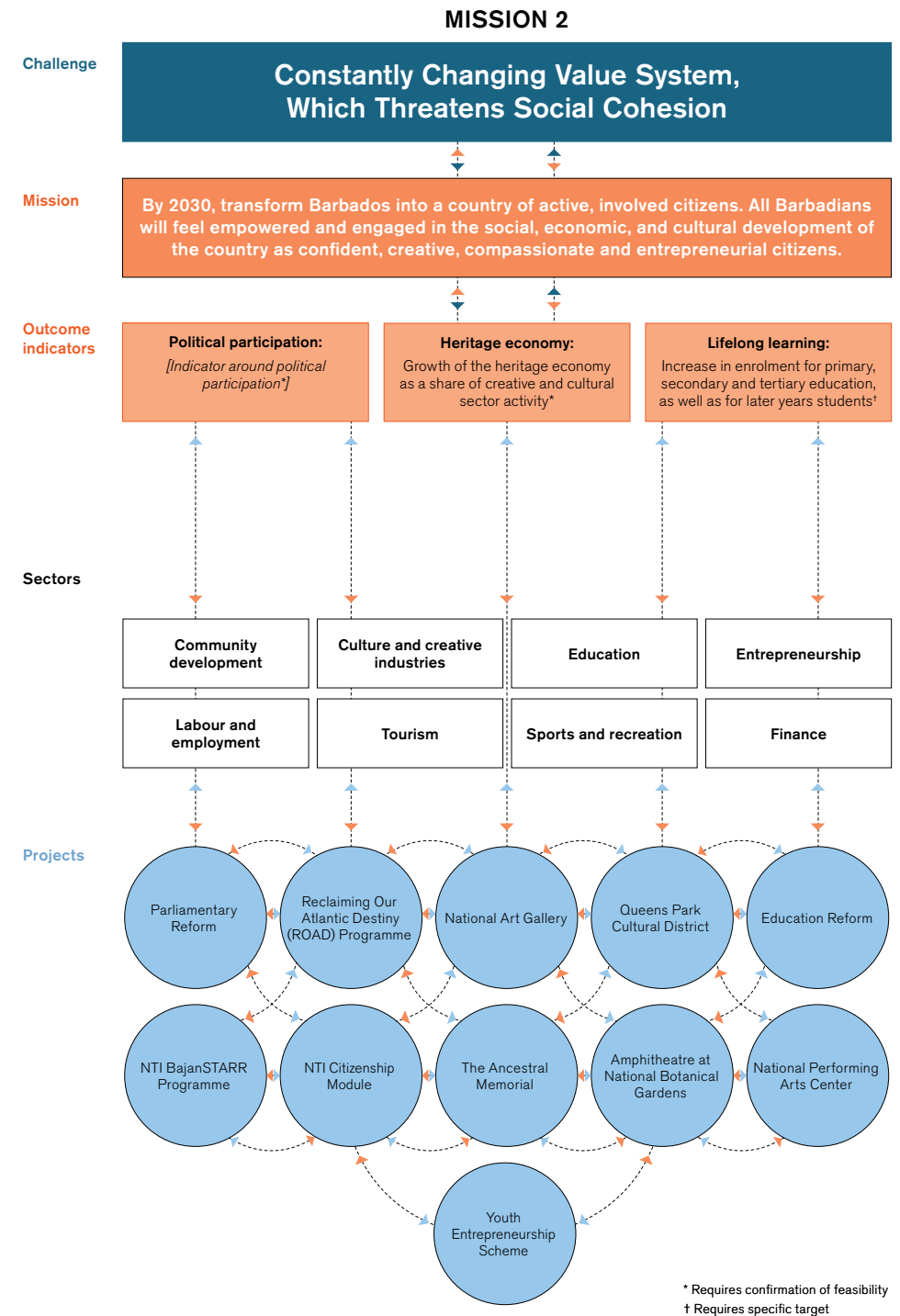
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Annex: The six missions of Mission Barbados



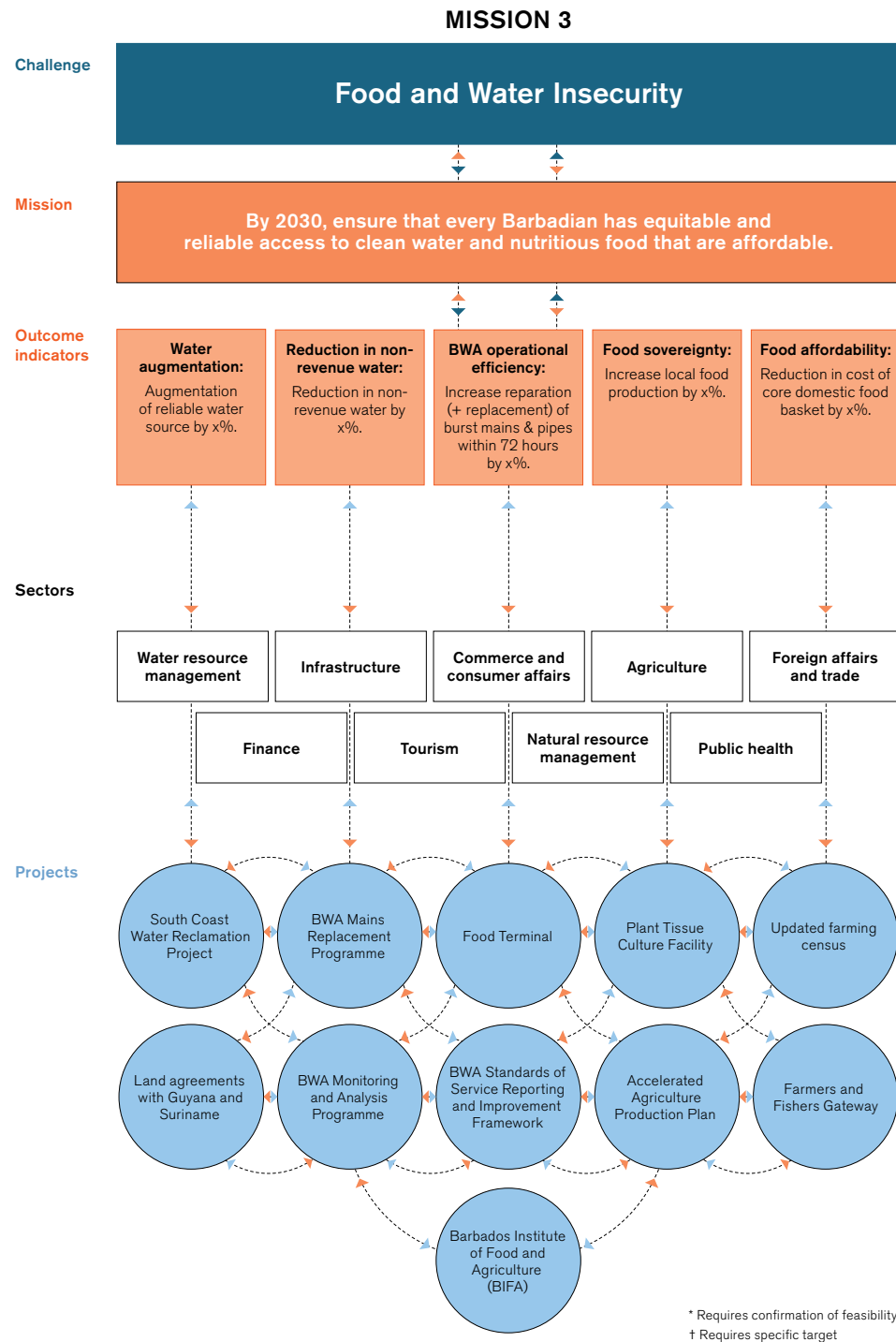
** Requires confirmation of feasibility
† Requires specific target

Annex: The six missions of Mission Barbados

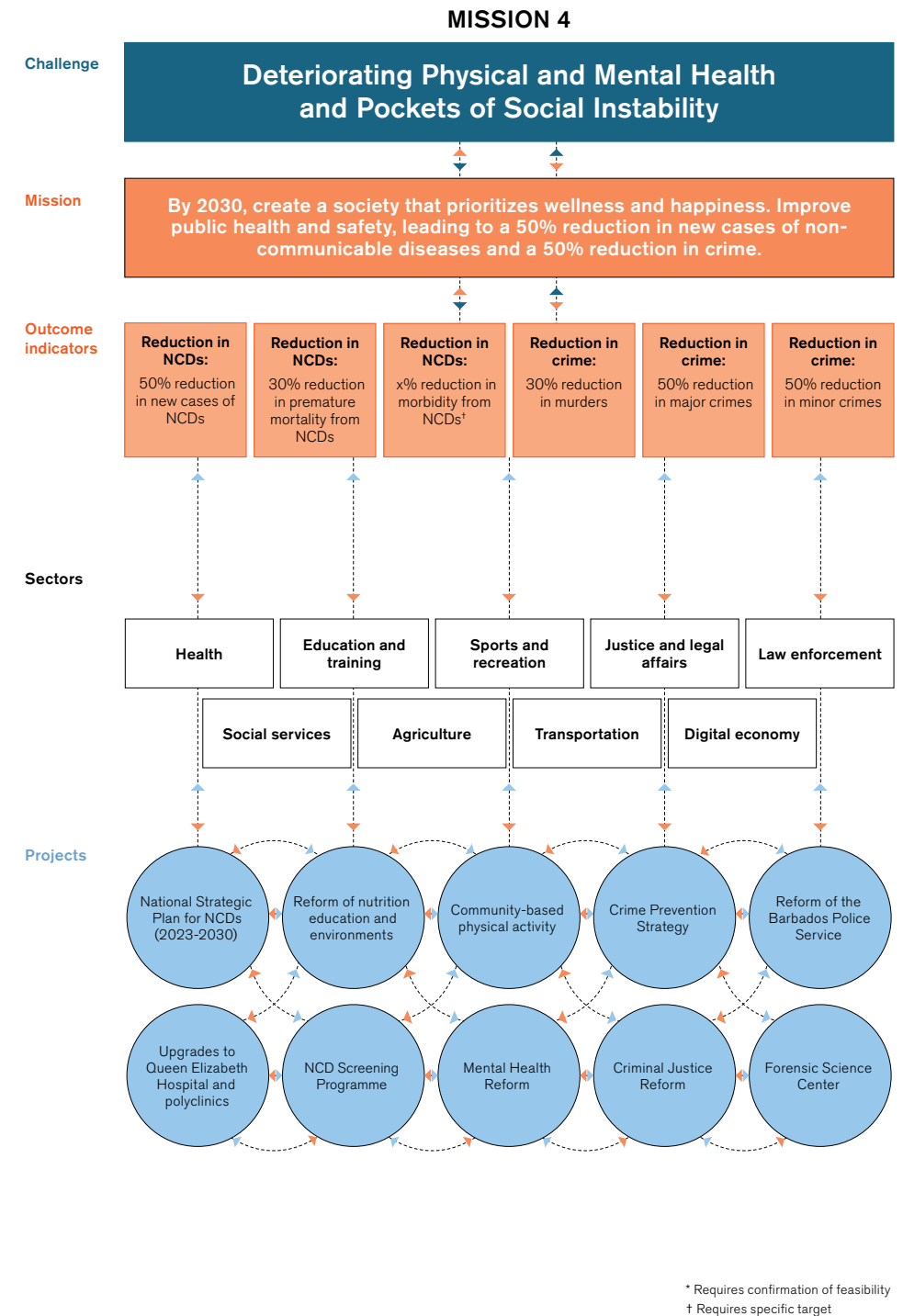


* Requires confirmation of feasibility
† Requires specific target

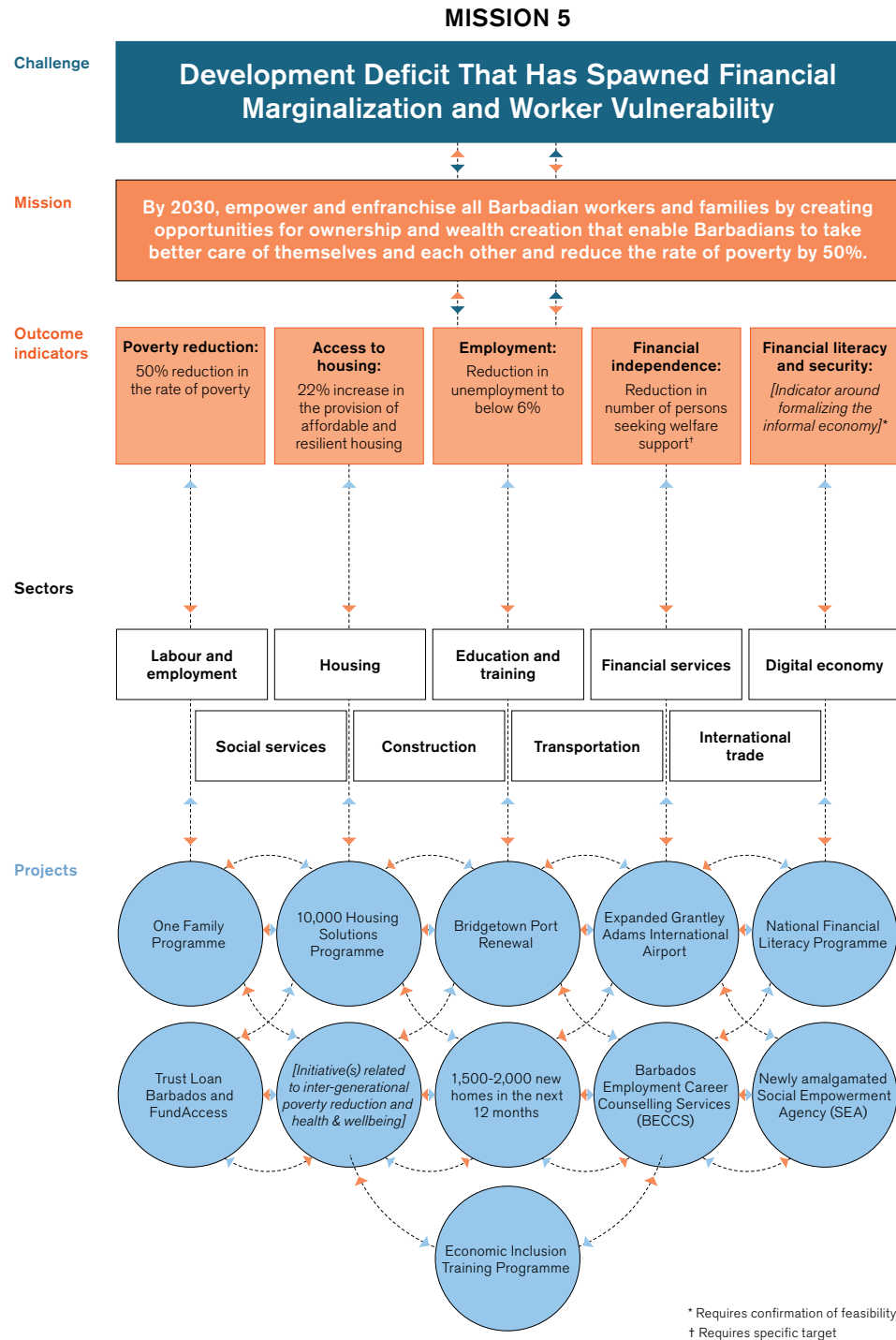
Annex: The six missions of Mission Barbados



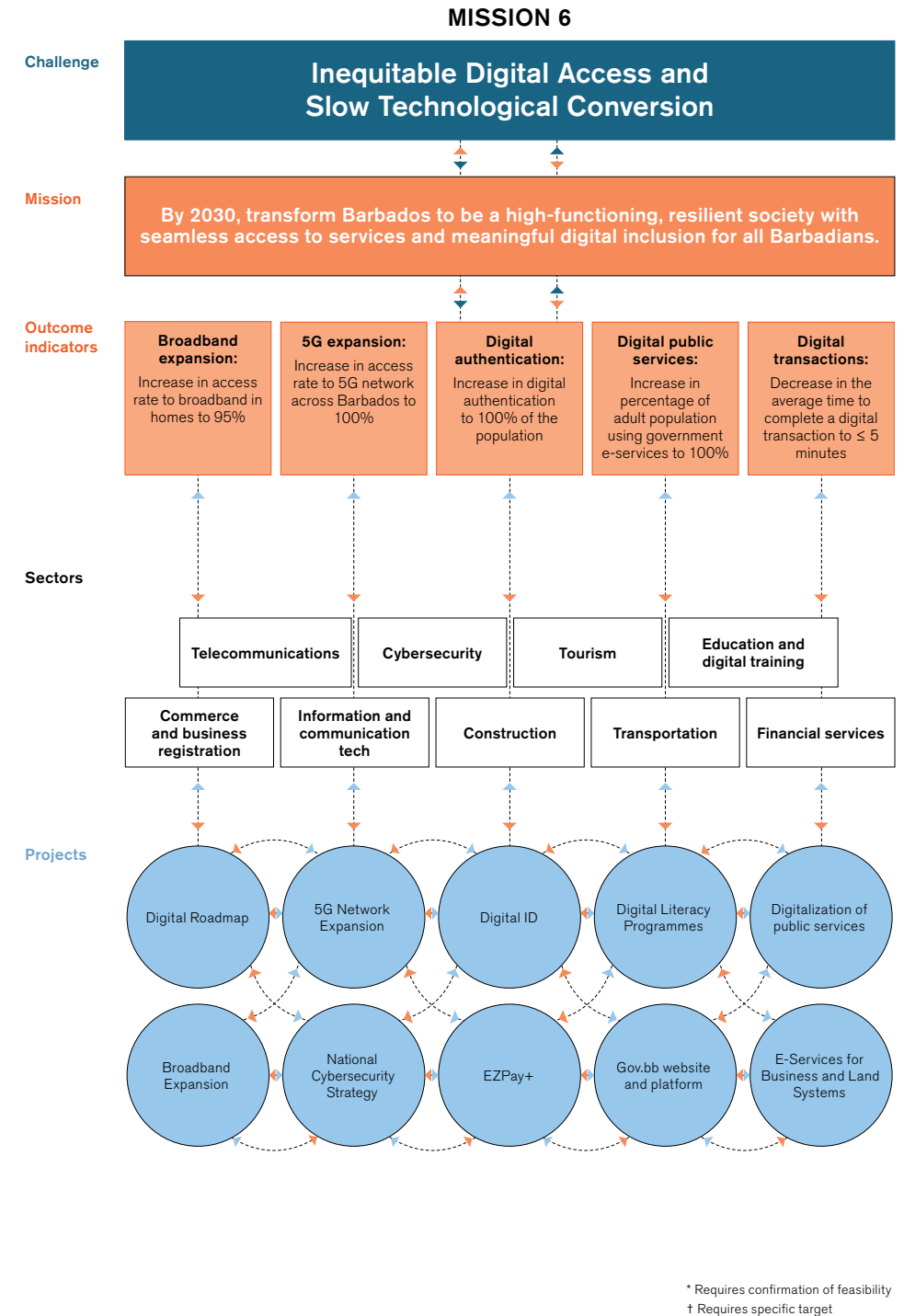
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About the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP)

The Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP) at University College London (UCL) brings together cutting-edge academic theory with teaching and policy practice, to rethink the role of the state in tackling some of the biggest challenges facing society.

IIPP works with partners to develop a framework which challenges traditional economic thinking, with the goal of creating, nurturing and evaluating public value in order to achieve growth that is more innovation-led, inclusive and sustainable. This requires rethinking the underlying economics that have informed the education of global public servants and the design of government policies.

IIPP's work feeds into innovation and industrial policy, macroeconomic and financial reform, institutional change and sustainable development. A key pillar of IIPP's research is its understanding of markets as outcomes of the interactions between different actors. In this context, public policy should not be seen as simply fixing market failures, but also as actively shaping and co-creating markets. Re-focusing and designing public organisations around mission-led, public purpose aims will help tackle the grand challenges facing the 21st century.

IIPP is uniquely structured to ensure that this groundbreaking academic research is harnessed to tackle real world policy challenges. IIPP does this through its high-quality teaching programme, along with its growing global network of partners, and the ambitious policy practice programme.

IIPP is a department within UCL – and part of The Bartlett, ranking number one in the world for architecture and the built environment in the world.

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